

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: ELAB,SP, UK

SUBJECT: TUC VISIT TO SPAIN NOVEMBER 15-18 IOUY

REF: LONDON 15227

1. AS FLAGGED IN REFTEL, A HIGH LEVEL BRITISH TUC DELEGATION (LEN MURRAY, TUV SECGEN; JACK JONE, SECGEN OF TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS; JOE GORMLEY, MINERS PRESIDENT GEORGE SMITH, SECGEN OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS; AND ALAN HARGREAVES, HEAD OF TUC INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT) VISITED SPAIN NOVEMBER 15-18 AS THE GUESTS OF THE SOCIALISTS UGT.

2. STARTING OFF IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY, THEY CONFERRED IN
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BILBAO WITH REGIONAL UGT LEADERS AND WITH THE STV (SOLIDARILY

OF BASQUE WORKERS- TRADITIONAL WING) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. IN BARCELONA, THE TUC GROUP MET WITH UGT LEADERS FROM THE FOUR CATALAN PROVINCES. THEY DID NOT SEE EITHER THE CNT OF SOC, BOTH CATALUNIA ORIENTED TRADE UNIONS. WHILE IN THE AREA THEY VISITED GANDESA, TARRAGONA, AND THE "EBRO FRONT" WHERE JACK JONES FOUGHT DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR.

3. IN MADRID, THE TUC DELEGATION HAD A LONG WORKING SESSION WITH UGT SEC GEN NICOLAS REDONDO AND THE UGT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. THEY ALSO ATTENDED UGT HOSTED RECEPTION WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS (SWC) AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST USO. THE HIGHLIGHTS OF A WELL ATTENDED PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON NOVEMBER 18 ARE REPORTED BELOW.

4. IN AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT, MURRAY EMPHASIZED THREE BASIC IMPRESSIONS FROM THEIR VISIT: A) THE CERTAINTY THAT "DEMOCRACY IS FIRMLY ON THE AGENDA" IN SPAIN AND ALSO DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISM: B) THE GROWING ABILITY OF THE UGT AND OTHER UNIONS TO REPRESENT THE WISHED OF THE THE WORKERS:AND C) THAT ALTHOUGH OLD (FOUNDED IN 1888), TODAY'S UGT IS A YOUTHFUL AND ENTHUSIASTIC TRADE UNION MOVEMENT DESPITE GOVERNMENT REPRESSION. IN ESPONSE TO QUESTION, JONES STATED THAT DEGREE OF REPRESSION STILL REMAINING, (REFERENCE TO ARRESTS DURING NOVEMBER 12 "DAY OF STOPPAGES") IS "OUT OF DATE" AND THAT WORLD OPININ WAS CRITICAL.

5. WHEN QUESTIONED BY WEST GERMAN REPORTED ON DANGER OF "WATER DOWN DEMOCRACY" MURRAY AGAIN EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT DEMOCRACY HERE WAS "GROWING FROM THE ROOTS". MURRAY AND JONES BOTH DENIED THAT SWC HAD RECEIVED ANY TUC DUNDS DURING EARLIER VISIT OF MARCELINO CAMACHO TO LONDON. WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE TUC AID TO UGT, MURRAY NOTED THAT THEIR SOLIDARITY FUNDS WERE CHANNEDLED THROUH THE ICFTU AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETATIATS. WHEN ASKED ABOUT ANY CONTACTS THE TUC MIGHT HAVE HAD WITH THE SWC, MURRAY MENTIONED THE RECEPTION WHICH HAD INCLUDING REPREENTATIVIES OF THE SWC, USO, AND THE PSOE (SPANISH SOCIALIST PARTY), EMPHASIZING THAT THE UGT NOT THE TUC HAD BEEN THE HOST. RESPONDING THAT THE QUERY ABOUT POSSIBLE COOPERATION BETWEEN SPANISH TRADE UNIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THE COMMUNITIS, MURRAY CLAIMED THAT THE TUC WAS NOT ARROGANT ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH POLITICAL ISSUES DURING THEIR VISIT, RATHER CONCENTRATING ON BREAD AND BUTTER LABOR MATTERS.

6. COMMENTING TO EMBASSY, BRITISH LABATT NOTED FOLLOWING. TUC HAD REACTED NEGATIVELY TO WHAT THEY FELT WAS OVER NATIONALISTIC AND EVEN SEPARATIST TREND OF BASQUE STV. AT THE RECEPTION,

DELEGATION HAD MET PSOE'S FELIPE GONZALEZ, AS WELL AS SWC
TOP LEADERSHIP: CAMACHO, SARTORIUS, AND ARIZA. HE DID NOT
BELIEVE THAT TUC VISIT WOULD RESULT IN ANY TUC BILATERAL AID
TO THE UGT, AND ALSO NOTED THAT TUC HAD BEEN
IMPRESSED WITH USO PROSPECTS. WE ADD, HOWEVER, THAT DEPSITE PAYING LI
P
SERVICE TO TEMPORARY NEED FOR PLURALISTIC TRADE UNION MOVEMENT
IN BRAIN, MURRAY AND JONES SUPPORTED "UNITY OF ACTIONSZ
(MURRY), "UNITED ACTIVITY AT PLACE OF WORK" (JONES) AND
DESIRABILITY OF AN EVENTUAL UNIFIED TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN
SPAIN (BOTH). IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT BOTH UGT AND USO
SUPPORT THE COCEPT OF UNITY" SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE", BUT
ONLY AFTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCTATIC TRADE UNIONS IN A
PLURALISTIC SYSTEM.
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